

Remarks

In the above-identified Office Action the Examiner has stated that Applicant has not filed a certified copy of the priority document as required. Applicant notes that this is a application filed under § 371 under PCT as such the priority document was filed in the international phase. Applicant encloses an International Application status report, which was obtained on-line at the WIPO site, and shows that the priority document has been received.

The Examiner has objected to the specification based on certain noted typographical errors. By the above amendments Applicant has corrected the specification as required.

In addition, claim 17 had been objected to because of a noted informality. Claim 17 has been amended to correct this informality.

Claims 1-2, 4-9 and 14-16 have been rejected as anticipated by Roberts. In addition claims 11-13 have been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts while claim 3 has been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts in view of Jott Australia Pty., and claim 10 has been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts in view of Johnson. Claim 17 has been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts in view of States and claim 18, 19 and 21 have been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts and States in view of Murty. Claim 20 has been rejected as unpatentable over Roberts in view of Murty.

Applicant has amended the independent claims 1 and 20 so that they now recite an open upper inlet, an open lower inlet, and the pellets travel from the inlet to the outlet in the substantially continuous manner. Applicant notes that the principal reference (Roberts) in each of the rejections teaches what is essentially a batch operation. As stated on page 2 of Roberts line 92-9, there is a discharge gate 50 which is provided over the discharge means 22. The operation of this discharge gate causes the discharging means 22 to operate intermittently so the material descends intermittently (Roberts page 3, line 23-25).

As stated above Applicant has amended its independent claims so that the movement of material to Applicants apparatus is on a substantially continuous basis thereby differentiating itself from Roberts.

The present invention (as now claimed) related to a dryer for drying particulate material, wherein the dryer does not require inlet and outlet flow control valves (page 7, line

1). Consequently, the dryer inlet and outlet are open and the flow of particulate material through the dryer is substantially continuous (page 6, lines 21 and 22).

Although maintaining the inlet and the outlet of a dryer open permits a substantially continuous flow of particulate material through the dryer, such an arrangement also has the potential to significantly reduce the dryer efficiency due to the passage of air into and out of the dryer through the open inlet and outlet. Therefore, to dry particulate material in a manner that is both substantially continuous and efficient, the present inventors have devised a dryer design that minimizes the passage of air through the open inlet and outlet of the dryer and thus allows the substantially continued passage of material.

It is submitted that the present invention (as now claimed) is both novel and non-obvious in light of Roberts, since Roberts neither discloses nor suggests a dryer with an open inlet and outlet such that particulate material flows through the dryer in a substantially continuous manner. Furthermore, Roberts is completely silent about problems associated with maintaining the inlet and outlet of a dryer open, and hence provides no incentive whatsoever for a person skilled in the art of modify the teaching therein so as to overcome such problems and arrive at the invention defined in the revised claim set.

The dependent claims, in so far as they encompass each and every one of the limitations of the independent claims, should also be non-obvious and thus allowable over the art of record.

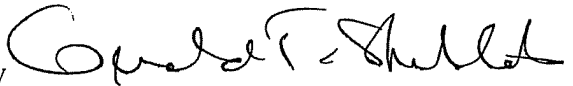
Applicant hereby requests reconsideration and reexamination thereof.

No further fee or petition is believed to be necessary. However, should any further fee be needed, please charge our Deposit Account No. 23-0920, and deem this paper to be the required petition.

Respectfully submitted,

HUSCH BLACKWELL SANDERS LLP
WELSH & KATZ

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By 

Gerald T. Shekleton
Registration No. 27,466

120 South Riverside Plaza
Floor 22
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 655-1500

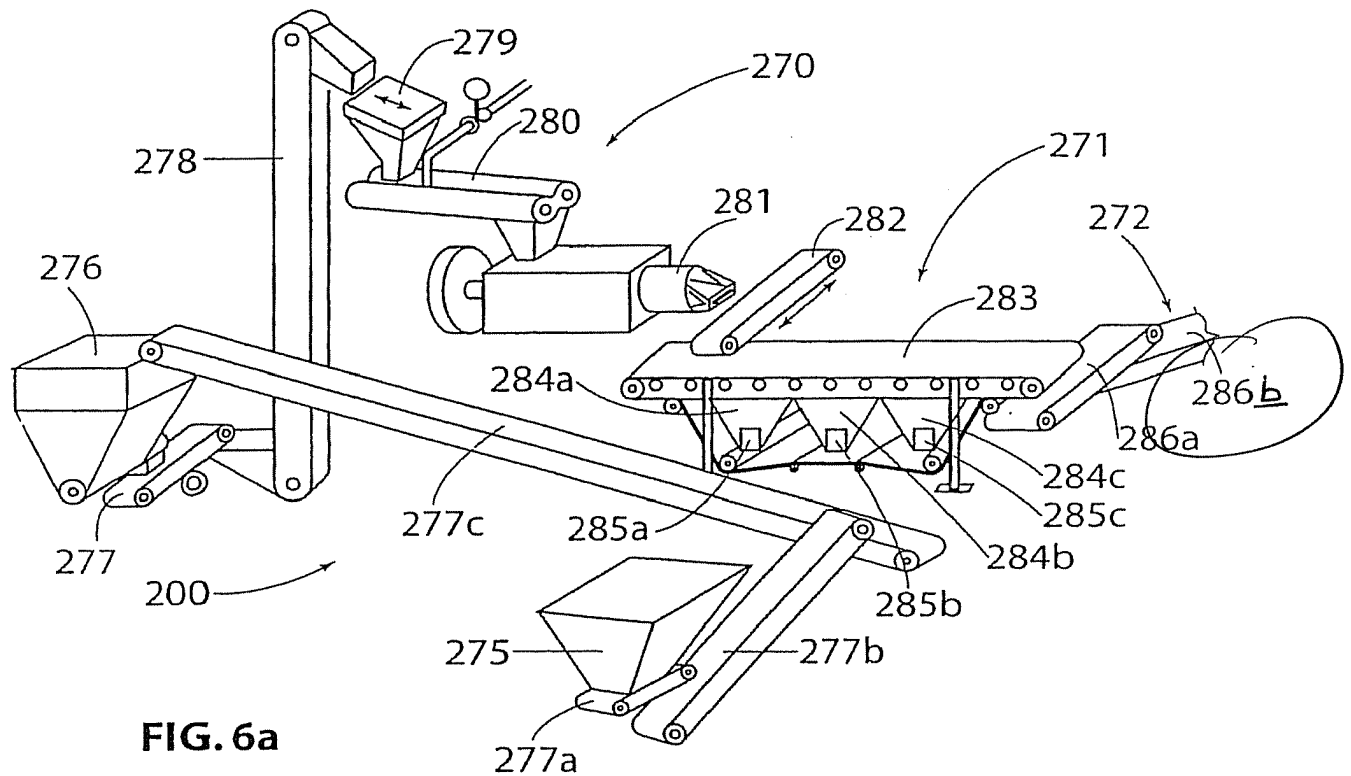


FIG. 6a

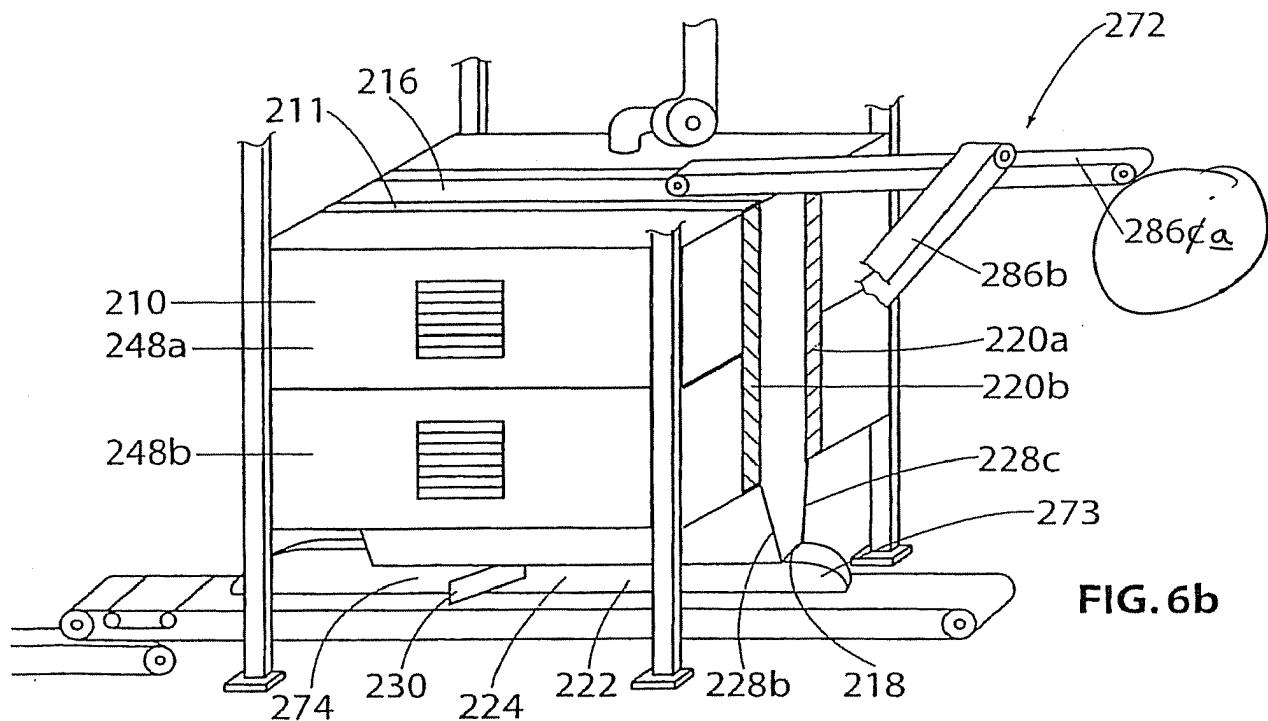


FIG. 6b